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Americans
awaken

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AMERICANS, AWAKEN!

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FRANCIS SAVONA

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FOREWORD

This little pamphlet is an attempt to answer (although briefly) another pamphlet, issued by Robert Flaherty, Esq., entitled "Suppressed History." I have endeavored, in my refutation of Mr. Flaherty's assertions and charges, not to hurt his feelings; however, if I have, I am extremely regretful that my having to tell the truth has resulted in his inconvenience.

For the success in being able to present this pamphlet to the reader, the author is indebted to the kindness of his two brothers, Loretto W. and Anthony F. Savona, as well as the Messrs. Joseph Silberstein, Armand Boffa and Benjamin Fuchs, who assisted in the search for authorities. I desire herewith publicly to tender them my thanks.

FRANCIS SAVONA.

NEW YORK, March 21, 1916.

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A Rejoinder to a Pamphlet entitled "Suppressed History," by Mr. Robert Flaherty, Esq., by an ItalianAmerican.

I.

After reading your black-covered pamphlet entitled, "Suppressed History," I had no other alternative than to issue a reply in refutation of your statements. I have read innumerable books and pamphlets bearing on the European War, both pro-Ally and pro-German, but yours is far more prejudiced than any other I have ever read. It is violently pro-British and un-American. My honest opinion is that your pamphlet was written only for one purpose, and that was to further the cause of England, at the expense of the United States, not considering whether that cause is just or *vice versa*. Your manner of writing appears factitious, which is subject to the repellance of the impartial American reader, while on the other hand it does not fail to win the continued confidence of an Anglophile. I shall endeavor to enlighten you, if it is the truth you seek, on the question as to whether England or Germany has been our worst enemy. My thoughts and actions are always dictated by the highest regard for the interests of the United States, my adopted country. I care not for either England, Germany, Italy or any other country in the world; but I do care for justice and honesty.

II.

First of all I wish to dispose of your claim, which is founded on a story narrated by L. E. Chittenden in his volume of "Recollections," that "an Englishman saved Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Atlantic coast towns from bombardment during our Civil War," by his offer to deposit $5,000,000 in gold for the issue of an order to prevent the departure of two rebel armored vessels from England. The necessity of making the deposit was avoided, however, for when Adams realized that it was only a clever contrivance to deceive the United States, (for it was practically an impossibility to furnish that amount by the Union, within the short period allowed) so that the two Confederate vessels could make a dash to sea, he made it manifest to Earl Russell that we would rather go to war with England than yield to her underhandedness. In a book which was published for the purpose of celebrating the one hundred years

of unbroken peace between the United States and Great Britain, the author says (Dunning, The British Empire and the United States, 1914, p. 219):

> "He (Adams) brought Earl Russell to realize that the Alabama should not be permitted to sail from Liverpool, though the earl's order to detain her arrived too late to serve its purpose. A year later when a far more serious menace to the Northern cause was prepared by the clever Confederate agents in England, and two great ironclads were nearing completion by the same firm that built the Alabama, *Adams went to the verge of a hostile rupture before he persuaded Russell to seize the vessels.*"

III.

On the basis of the reply to your letter of April 14, 1915, by the Counsellor of the Department of State, Robert Lansing (now Secretary of State), dated June 2, 1915, you purport to prove that England respected our blockade of Southern ports during the Civil War although it "had good grounds for protest and could and should have compelled the keeping open of the ports." The following communication, dated December 30, 1863, which flatly contradicts you, was sent by Mr. Adams, our Minister at the Court of St. James, to Earl Russell (Foreign Relations 1863, Vol. 1, p. 42):

> "It is a fact that few persons in England will now be bold enough to deny, first, that vessels have been built in British ports, as well as manned by her Majesty's subjects, with the design and intent to carry on war against the United States; secondly, that other vessels owned by British subjects have been, and are yet, *in the constant practice of departing from British ports laden with contraband of war, and many other commodities, with the intent to break the blockade* and to procrastinate the war; thirdly, that such vessels have been, and are, insured by British merchants in the commercial towns of this kingdom with the understanding that they are despatched for that *illegal purpose.* It is believed to be beyond denial that British subjects have been, and continue to be, enlisted in this kingdom in the service of the insurgents, with the intent to make war on the United States, or *to break the blockade legitimately established,* and, to a proportionate extent, to annul its purpose. It is believed that persons high in social position and in fortune contribute their aid, directly and indirectly, in building and equipping ships-of-war, as well as other vessels, and furnishing money as well as goods, with the hope of sustaining

the insurgents in their resistance to the government. . . . In short, so far as the acts of these numerous and influential parties can invoke them, the British people may be considered as actually carrying on war against the United States."

IV.

As to the English having "made two blades of grass grow where one grew before," I will cite you some facts which will no doubt prove amazing. Take India for example. I have before me a little pamphlet entitled "British Rule in India" written by former Secretary of State, William Jennings Bryan, which should interest all lovers of truth, fair-play and impartiality. Comment on the following extracts is absolutely unnecessary; the authenticity and veracity of these statements cannot be questioned:

> "The government of India, is as arbitrary and despotic as the government of Russia ever was, and in two respects it is worse. First, it is administered by an alien people, whereas the officials of Russia are Russians. Secondly, it drains a large part of the taxes out of the country, whereas the Russian government spends at home the money which it collects from people. (p. 7.)
>
> "The poverty of the people of India is distressing in the extreme; millions live on the verge of starvation all the time, and one would think that their very appearance would plead successfully in their behalf." (p. 9.)

British misrule in India is not an occasional but an incessant and systematic practice. The treatment accorded the natives, taken as a whole, is a deliberate violation of the laws of humanity, justice and liberty, which the British Empire is claimed to stand for. Lack of space prevents me from giving you other facts which expose British misrule in India. The delay in the spread of education in India means a retardation in the inevitable revolt for freedom and independence.

V.

Can there be freedom in a country (as is the case with England) where one-third of the people are always on the verge of starvation, as has been proven, and where every fourth man is buried in a pauper's grave? The great scientist, Alfred Russel Wallace in his book on "Social Environment and Moral Progress," N. Y., 1913, declares that "the responsibility of Parliament is really

criminal, since it always allows its legislation to be made ineffective by the fear of diminishing the employers' profits, thus deliberately placing money-making above human life, and human well-being." (p. 53.) "Who has murdered the 100,000 children," he asks, "who die annually before they are one year old?" (p. 58.) He sums up (p. 63) with good reason, that the conditions of labor in Great Britain through lack of government interference *"are a disgrace to civilization."*

VI.

The claim that England stands for liberty rests mainly on the fact that she was the first country to free her negro slaves. An American authority of Celtic blood, who lived in England for more than twenty-five years, writes: "It was pointed out at the time, that after losing her chief North American colonies the large profits Britain had been making out of the slave traffic had fallen away to a small amount and that by freeing her slaves she only wished to read to the United States a lesson which would cost them infinitely more than it cost her." During the American Civil War it was this same England that did all in its power, while professing to be neutral, to dismember our country. "Of all the nations," wrote Seward on December 27, 1864, in his Diary or Notes on the War, "Great Britain seems to us the last that could justly or wisely become, directly or indirectly, an opponent of the United States in a civil war begun and waged and persisted in by insurgents for the extension of African slavery." (Works of William H. Seward, Vol. 5, 1884, p. 168.)

VII.

Have we so soon forgotten the only friends we had when we really needed friends? Why not read anew the history of our Civil War, when this nation was really made, and learn again what Germany did for us in that hour of need? I will cite a few extracts from the speeches in Congress taken from the Congressional Globe of the 41st Congress, 3rd session, Part 2 of 1870-71 (pp. 954 to 955):

> Mr. Pomeroy: They [the Germans] sent us men; they recruited our armies with men; *they helped to save the life of this nation.* . . .
>
> Mr. Stewart (later, on p. 955): Allow me to call the attention of the Senator from Tennessee to the fact, which he must recollect, of the amount of our bonds that were taken in Germany at the time we needed that they should be taken, and when they

were prohibited from the exchange in London and from the Bourse in Paris, and not allowed to be on the markets there at all on account of the state of public opinion there, while Germany alone came in and took five or six hundred million dollars at a time when we needed money more than anything else to sustain our credit. That is a fact showing sympathy certainly.

VIII.

Now as to the Monroe Doctrine,—are you aware of the actual circumstances leading to its promulgation? You appear to be ignorant on this point, for, regardless of the following facts, you insist that it is of English origin. In the proceedings at the Second Congress of Verona, held by the Holy Alliance in 1822, "the subject of helping Spain recover her revolting colonies in America was discussed." (Tucker, The Monroe Doctrine, Bost. 1885, pp. 7-8.) "This action of the powers threatened English commercial interests already established with these States, and England, through George Canning, promptly proposed to the United States a joint declaration by the two governments against their action." (New Int. Encyc. Vol. 16, Ed. 2, 1916, p. 169.) If Spain succeeded in recovering her American colonies, a restrictive commercial policy would follow which would mean the loss of a considerable and increasing trade then enjoyed by England. Canning's object was to prevent this if possible, hence his proposal, which you no doubt know was not agreed to by the United States. However, *"in so far as the message was construed to interdict future colonization, it was generally opposed (in Europe) even by Canning."* (same p. 170.) The purpose which the doctrine was intended to serve as declared by President Monroe was apparent to Canning to be different to that desired by him.

IX.

I protest against the abuse and ridicule being heaped upon the German people. Let us be fair to this great and wonderful race, so competent in industry, science, music, arts and letters. I believe that Col. Roosevelt recently said that Germany is the teacher of the world. Don't they prove themselves to be the most industrious, peace-loving and progressive of citizens? Are they not better fitted to become American citizens, both socially and morally, than any other nationality coming from Europe or Asia? It has been well said by a member of Congress, that as law-abiding citizens they are unsurpassed and perhaps unequaled by any race of people. Did the Americans of Anglophile sympathies, in which category you belong, object for a moment to such men as Muh-

lenberg, Steuben, Herkimer and Pastorious, who fought against England for our independence?

German-American citizens are accused of treason and disloyalty just because they are pro-German, while American citizens of Anglo-Saxon blood espousing the Allied cause are hailed as patriots. Is it a crime, then, under the Constitution to be pro-German? Does not the Constitution confer upon all citizens, native and naturalized, the right of free speech? I have as perfect a right to favor Germany as my opponent has England; I respect his opinion and in justice to the constitutional right of free speech, I see no reason why my opinion should not be respected in cordial reciprocation. Nevertheless, it appears to me, in view of existing conditions, that in order to be respected and treated as a loyal American citizen one must be pro-British; in other words, if you want to be acclaimed a patriotic American, you must meekly submit to John Bull's dictation.

X.

If we have again come to be a colony of and dependent on Great Britain; if it is obligatory upon me, as an American citizen, to foster Britannia's interests at the expense of those of my adopted country; if I am obliged to uphold the administration, right or wrong, and if I have no more right to criticize the national policy of public servants whose salaries are paid out of the people's treasury, than a Russian subject, then I will quietly submit my patriotism to be adjudicated as treasonable, but my freedom of speech in the criticism and denunciation of those who do so adjudicate me will continue to be more forcible and passionate. I will support the President of my adopted country only when my conscience tells me that he is in the right, and not merely because he is President. We are not in despotic England, the oppressor of India and Ireland, or autocratic Russia. If I, or my father I should say, had been willing to submit to England's tutelage, he would have kept me in my native country,—Italy. If the Administration is willing to surrender the independent rights of the American people, it is travelling on the wrong road. If it has forgotten that the United States of America is a free and independent nation, it is badly mistaken. If it feels or is inclined to the belief that it is best that we bow to the behests of English domination, as Belgium did, for instance, it is also mistaken. The American people as a whole have not forgotten their own right to live free and independent, and if their liberty is threatened,—well, England in one way, and the Democratic régime at Washington in the other, better be on the lookout!

NOTE: Italics throughout are mine.

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Francis Savon

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